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SMALL TARPON

May I, in regard to the article on young Tarpon in COPEIA, No. 93, p. 25, call attention to Bulletin U. S. Fish Commission for 1902, p. 222, where specimens of young Tarpon are recorded from fresh-water at Pinar del Rio, Cuba, respectively 20, 119, 182 and 192 mm. long?

C. H. EIGENMANN,
Bloomington, Ind.

AN ADDITION TO MY LIST OF MICROHYLA

When describing the Chinese Microhyla (*M. eremita*)* I gave a list of the species of the genus which, at that time, I considered valid. I omitted one, which was somewhat obscurely published, to be sure, but which is evidently well worthy of recognition. It is *Microhyla niasensis* Van Kampen. (In Kleinweg de Zwaan, *Die Insel Nias*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1915, p. 279; Separate p. 3). I wish to make this correction lest it might be assumed that I had doubt of the standing of this apparently very good species.

THOMAS BARBOUR,
Cambridge, Mass.

An Incident in the Feeding Habit of *Crocodilus niloticus*.

It was my good fortune, as naturalist of the Smith-

*Occ. Papers Mus. Zool. Univ. Mich., 76, 1920, p. 3.

sonian African Expedition to have a camp, during December, 1919, on the banks of the Kafue River in Northern Rhodesia, where the commonest of African crocodiles, *Crocodilus niloticus*, is well represented.

While hunting one night with a jack-light I wounded a Reedbuck, (*Cervicapra arundinum*), but it escaped in the darkness. The following morning, with the aid of a native and his three dogs, I set out to hunt for the wounded buck. The dogs located it in a thicket, about half a mile from the river, and the buck made for the water, pursued by the dogs and followed by the negro and myself. My companion easily outran me and reached the river bank first. There the buck had hidden among the tall reeds near the shore until the dogs were very close. The native was standing on the bank and I was approaching, but still about one hundred yards away, when he began frantically jumping about and brandishing his spear and short hatchet, and yelling to his dogs. At the moment, I was close to a termite hill about ten feet high, and so I ran to the top that I might see out over the river, for the reeds along the bank were rather tall.

From the termite hill I could see everything. One of the dogs was about half way across the river, here about one hundred yards wide; the other had just started out from the reeds on our side, at this point, both dogs, heeding their master's voice, turned back for the buck was about two-thirds of the way across the river and a crocodile was coming up stream towards it. Only the top of the reptile's head and back could be seen above the surface of the water. When within four or five feet of the buck its huge mouth opened and there was a small splash of spray as it shot forward, grabbed the buck by the head, and started to pull it down. They were hardly hidden beneath the surface when there was an upheaval of water, the crocodile had evidently gotten below its prey, and the buck had kicked it with all four feet. The buck and the crocodile came to the surface about ten feet apart, and the former started swimming

towards the shore, but now aimed at a point further up stream. The crocodile without any apparent hurry turned and approached the buck again until within four feet, then it again jumped forward, and its jaws closed on its victim's head. Buck and crocodile disappeared under the water, and did not come to the surface again during the ten or fifteen minutes I waited.

H. C. RAVEN,
New York, N. Y.

[See account of a Crocodile, H. C. Raven, *Forest and Stream*, June, 1921, p. 256.]

THE CALIFORNIA OR ROSY BOA (*LICHANURA ROSEOFUSCA* COPE).

It might be of interest to note the food reactions of a California boa in captivity. The literature of the life-history of this species is somewhat scanty. The captive was taken, Dec. 16, 1917 in the desert, seven miles south of Palm Springs, San Bernardino Co., California, by Dr. J. Chester Bradley. He kept it as a pet until the following May when it was shipped to me at Ithaca, N. Y. During the period of Dec. 1917-May, 1918, it fed on nothing. With us it began the same career and fasted. Flies, spiders, various insects, and worms were offered but not accepted.

In midsummer we placed in its cage a house mouse. Later the same day we discovered the mouse had been killed. It had apparently been seized between the eyes but not eaten. In a few days we captured a live white-foot mouse and placed it with the snake. Almost instantly it began to be active. The snake deliberate normally became animated. Soon it seized the mouse on the side of the body. Then it began to coil itself about the animal. When the prey was sufficiently held by the coils the snake released its mouth hold and felt along the body and head until it seized the mouse between the eyes as in the house mouse. Then it began to crush the creature with its coils. But this mouse it also did not eat. In either case it was not the size which was responsible for the non-completion of the process, as was later revealed.

Our main objective was to make it feed. In two nesting boxes were young English sparrows of which we wished to dispose. We placed one in the cage. Instantly the snake seized it by the body, coiled about it, released mouth hold, sought the head, began crushing with coils and finally began swallowing the bird quite rapidly for a snake. There were practically no feathers on the bird. Thereafter it ate young English sparrows. It usually went through the process we have described, a truly constrictor habit. Rarely, however, it would seize the bird by leg or head and swallow it at once with no coiling about the bird at all. Is its natural habit feeding on young birds of the desert?

As a pet I consider it the finest native snake of the states. It is gentle, never bites, is clean and glossy of skin, coils into a ball or up the arm and is a beautifully patterned snake. This individual was befriended by the whole neighborhood of children.

A. H. WRIGHT,
Ithaca, N. Y.

XIPHISTER VERSUS XIPHIDION

In 1859 Charles Girard gave the name *Xiphidion* to a well-marked genus of California blennies. Because of the name *Xiphidium* given to a genus of grasshoppers by Burmeister in 1838, in 1879 I introduced the new name *Xiphister* for the California fish-genus. But on the theory that *Xiphidion* and *Xiphidium* were different names, being spelled differently, Jordan and Evermann reverted in 1898 to *Xiphidion*. Mr. Morgan Hebard of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science informs me that the genus of grasshoppers was first named *Xiphidion* by Serville in 1831, *Xiphidium* being a purist correction. The name *Xiphister* should, therefore, stand for *Xiphister mucosus* and its allies.

DAVID STARR JORDAN,
Stanford University, Calif.

EDITED by J. T. NICHOLS, American Museum of Natural History

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